



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Seven international delegations seek Washington food and agricultural products

OLYMPIA – The state Department of Agriculture (WSDA), in cooperation with the [Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association](#), this month is hosting seven delegations of foreign buyers to showcase Washington food and agricultural products. The first two groups of buyers arrive this week from Southeast Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Other delegations will arrive from Central America on Oct. 16, India on Oct. 21, two groups from South Korea Oct. 23 and Nov. 6, and Taiwan on Oct. 24.

The visits give Washington food and agricultural producers an opportunity to display their products to buyers around the world who decide what products are sold in grocery stores, served in fine restaurants and fast food chains, or used as ingredients in manufactured products such as juices or snack foods. Buyers often visit during the fall harvest or on the way to annual food shows, such as the Produce Marketing Association Show in New Orleans this month.

“Matching qualified foreign buyers with Washington suppliers is one of our major ongoing objectives,” said Meg VanSchoorl, senior international trade specialist at WSDA. “There is no better tactic than bringing buyers and suppliers together, right at the site where the products are grown or processed. Buyers can get a good look at the potential supplier, their organization, personnel, and quality. Suppliers can show off their products and size up the buyers without spending thousands of dollars on travel and promotions.”

Southeast Asia Delegation: This 13-member delegation includes fruit importers and wholesalers from Malaysia and Singapore. From Oct. 8-11, they will meet with apple, pear, cherry, peach, potato, and onion exporters in Wenatchee, the Yakima area, Quincy, Brewster, and Chelan. The visit was organized by WSDA in conjunction with the Washington Apple Commission, USA Pears, and Northwest Cherries.

Latin America and Caribbean Delegation: Ten buyers from Colombia, Costa Rica, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, St. Kitts and St. Lucia will visit Washington Oct. 8-11. They will meet with apple, pear, potato and onion producers in Yakima, Wenatchee, and Pasco. One buyer, representing Exito, the largest food retail organization in Colombia, is looking for organic fruit. It is the first time Exito has sought to buy directly from Washington growers.

Central America Delegation: Eight buyers from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Costa Rica will be traveling the state Oct. 16-19 in search of wine, apples, pears, soft fruits, fresh and processed potatoes and onions. WSDA staff convinced these buyers to stop in Washington on their way to the Produce Marketing Show during a previous trade mission to Central America.

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India Delegation: One buyer who imports and distributes apples in India will arrive Oct. 21. He will meet with apple growers in Yakima and Wenatchee. He seeks to increase his volume of apple purchases, which last year represented a considerable portion of Washington apple exports to India.

South Korea Delegation: This delegation will arrive in Washington Oct. 23 as a follow-up to Gov. Locke's July Asia trade mission. Five food buyers are looking for food products such as hay and alfalfa, frozen juice concentrates and purees, and frozen seafood. Eight other delegates are seeking assorted non-food items. This visit is being planned by WSDA in conjunction with the [Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development](#). Also involved are the Korean International Trade Association and the Korea US Economic Cooperation.

Taiwan Delegation: Two buyers from Makro, a wholesale hypermarket that sells products to hotels and small retail outlets, will visit Seattle Oct. 24. They are interested in fresh produce, such as apples, pears, onions and potatoes, and consumer-ready manufactured products, such as wine.

South Korea Delegation: A second group of five companies from South Korea will arrive in Seattle Nov. 6 in search of processed and frozen fruits and vegetables, processed meats and organic foods products, convenience foods ready for the microwave oven, soup base and ethnic products.

September buying missions: September was another busy month for inbound trade delegations, including food ingredient buyers from Japan, China, and Taiwan; a wine mission from Latin America; and a high-level foreign agricultural attaché group from Washington, D.C. Sales of \$225,000 have already been reported from the Japanese food-ingredient buying group.

Washington state funds cannot be used to host these groups. Instead, WSDA applies for federal funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Between now and next September, WSDA will receive \$490,500 in USDA funding through the Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association. These funds will be used for inbound buying missions to Washington, overseas trade shows, outbound trade missions, seminars and in-store promotions in current or promising markets.

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